

*Friday, December 16, 2005*

## ***Board Members "Tie One On" to Highlight Sober Holiday Driving***

To emphasize the importance of safe, sober driving the holiday season, Safety Board Members participated in Mother's Against Drunk Driving's (MADD's) "Tie One On For Safety" event on Thursday, December 15, at L'Enfant Plaza.

Acting Chairman Rosenker and Member Debbie Hersman joined Glynn Birch, National President of MADD, and Bob Kittle from automotive safety systems manufacturer, Takata, in tying ribbons on their personal vehicles as a reminder that alcohol-related crashes are both devastating and avoidable.

In remarks at the event, Rosenker noted, "So many accidents that we investigate involve a complex solution, but this is one issue where the answer is simple—don't drink and drive."



*From Left to Right: Member Debbie Hersman, Glynn Birch, and Acting Chairman Rosenker*

## ***Team Launched to Investigate Accident at Chicago Midway***



On December 8, 2005, about 7:14 p.m. CST, Southwest Airlines flight 1248, a Boeing 737-700, overran runway 31C during the landing rollout. The aircraft departed the end of the runway and rolled through a blast fence, a perimeter fence, and onto a roadway. It came to a stop after striking two automobiles. One automobile occupant was fatally injured and another was seriously injured. The flight had departed from Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport in Maryland.

Robert Benzon, the Investigator-In-Charge, headed a team of 14. Member Ellen Engleman Conners served as principal spokesperson for the on-scene investigation. Keith Holloway was the public affairs officer on-scene.

## NTSB General Counsel Ronald S. Battocchi to Retire in January



Having logged more than 31 years at the Safety Board, no attorney has served the NTSB longer than Ron Battocchi, who became General Counsel in 1999, after having been Deputy General Counsel, attorney-advisor, and special assistant and counsel to three Safety Board Chairmen. Ron was also the agency's Deputy Managing Director from 1996 to 1999, and he has had a vital role in developing many of the fundamental legal principles that govern the way the Safety Board does business. In addition, he personally litigated several precedent-setting personnel cases at the Merit Systems Protection Board. Last year, Ron received the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service—the highest award given to senior executives in Federal Service, limited to just 1 percent of the SES.

After his retirement, Ron plans to devote more time to volunteer activities with his church and community, including Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together, a program that rehabilitates and repairs houses in the community.

*Member Ellen Engleman Conners and Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker present Ron Battocchi with a retirement plaque.*

## Team Investigates New Jersey Gas Explosion

Safety Board investigators were launched to the scene of a natural gas explosion and fire at an apartment building in Bergenfield, New Jersey, on December 13, 2005. The accident resulted in three fatalities and injuries to at least seven people in the building.

Karl Gunther is the Investigator-In-Charge, assisted by Rod Dyck, Cliff Zimmerman, Ravi Chhatre, and Chuck Koval, all from RPH-20. Also working on-scene were Erik Grosf (TDA), Joseph Kolly (RE-1), and Dana Sanzo (RPH-40).

## A Holiday Message



I would like to wish the great men and women of the NTSB and their families a happy and safe holiday season and a healthy and prosperous New Year. Our thoughts and prayers are also with our men and women in uniform serving our nation both at home and around the world.

Because this will be the last edition of the Chairman's Corner this year, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your hard work and accomplishments during the past 12 months. On behalf of the Board Members, we look forward to working with all of you in 2006, as we strive to make transportation even safer.

Sincerely,

Mark V. Rosenker

Acting Chairman

